The Myrtle.

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13.

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Christmas.

'Tis Christmas day! glad voices
Repeat the pleaeant sound;
And happy faces in our home,
And loving looks abound.
Why do we thus greet Christmas morn?
It is the day that Christ was born.

With little gifts that tell our love,
With garlands on the wall,
With thankful hearts and helpful hands,
We keep a festival
Why do we thus keep Christmas morn?
It is the day that Christ, was born.

Full eighteen hundred years ago
Christ Jesus came on earth,—
He came, he lived, he died for us;
We thank God for his birth;
And therefore we keep Christmas morn,
The day our Saviour, Christ. was born.

And on this Christmas morning,
When the frost is at the door,
Dear child! in your warm pleasant home,
Think of the sick and poor;
So shall you well keep Christmas morn,
The day our Saviour, Christ, was born.

Christ healed the sick, and helped the poor,
When he was on the earth;
Do what you can to be like him
This morning of his birth;
Help some one to keep Christmas morn,
The day your Saviour, Christ, was born.

Hymns for Children.

Worship, honor, glory, blessing,
Be to him who reigns above!
Young and old thy name confessing,
Saviour! let us share thy love!
As the saints in heaven adore thee,
We would bow before thy throne;
As thine angels bow before thee,
So on earth thy will be done!

For the Myrtle.

Christmas Carols.

THINGS many and beautiful were occurring just now, and the baby was to be christened. The old church had been dressed up in the sweetest way; its pillars were wound with evergreen trimming, and sprigs of holly, a basket of the loveliest geraniums sat each side of the pulpit cushion, offerings of those ladies of the parish who cultivate house-plants.

The little table before the pulpit had a charming bank of moss, in the centre of which stood the baptismal bowl, surrounded by flowers, and behind it rose a cross, exquisitely made of feathery evergreen with the wee white flower called "life everlasting," and up through the sweet flowers and moss, dripping cool and with a fairy-like tinkle, leaped the drops of a tiny, beautiful fountain. One who loved the dear baby had constructed this, and no one knew how it was contrived, or how the water got there.

The children hovered over the baby, like humming-birds around a honeysuckle, while Nurse put on long robes, and tied down those little sleeves with rose-colored ribbons, while her

sunny hair, (longer than babies of ten months usually have) hung down upon her sweet neck.

The sun shone bright and glorious on this frosty, sparkling afternoon, the buffalo robes were tucked around snug, and the wheels rolled away, and baby Mabel arrived at the church, and was taken from her delicate wrappings, looking as warm and peach-like, as if no austerity of climate had ever existed.

The church was crowded this afternoon, and all the little boys and girls who had come with their mothers, wriggled in their seats, and stretched their necks over pew-backs to "see the little baby that had come to meeting."

Little Mabel behaved with the propriety of a baby-queen, looking with deep, serious eyes, at all the people who were gazing at her. And when she caught sight of Uncle Harry by the pew door, she made dimples at him, and instantly hid her face in her mamma's furs.

Once she reached her little linen-cambric hand over to the next pew, and pulled a lady's bonnet ribbon, lisping out loud, "pretty, pretty." At this, some little boys and girls giggled right out.

When the choir struck up the opening hymn, the baby looked up at them, and jumped up and down in nurse's arms, and said she, "Hark! hark!" At the closing of the hymn, the minister rose and said, "The children to be baptized will now be presented," and papa and mamma with baby walked forward, and stood in the aisle.

Just now, to the surprise and delight of everybody, from a side-door entered a long line of children, bearing flowers, and proceeding up the aisle. As they went, they sweetly chanted, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help." Softly and slowly they went up stairs to a place prepared for them in the choir. Then the good minister offered a short prayer.

Papa now took his little one forward to the minister, who dipped his hand into that wee, tinkling fountain, and laid it on the baby's head, at which she snuggled her sunny locks down on papa's black coat, with a cunning smile, and only one dimple in sight.

The minister then pronounced a few impressive words and the baby was taken back to mamma. And while they were proceeding back to the pew, the juvenile choir above sang this hymn, beginning,

"Lo! 'tis an infant chorus sings
All glory to the King of kings,
And children's voices do proclaim,
Hosanna, now, to Jesus' name."

When the older singers joined in the chorus, the voices of the children, in a sweet alto, were repeating,

"Hosanna, hosanna, in Jesus' name."

Little Mabel was quietly listening, and her mamma, looking down upon her, saw that a ray of sun, piercing through the partially blinded window, had fallen on the baptismal drops on her darling's head, and rainbow hues were dancing there. Then grateful tears filled her eyes. When the beautiful child-song was finished, baby was enveloped in her delicate wrappings and carried out of the church. *Trenton.*

Jesus Knocking.

"My dear children, if I should come to your house and knock, would you let me in?"

"Yes, indeed," said six pleasant voices.

"I wish you would come," exclaimed Annie. "I would open the door myself."

"But would you keep me waiting a long time, Annie?"

"No, indeed, not a minute! I would run to let you in."

"Perhaps you would not try to hear, or would stop your ears and let me go away day after day without asking me to enter?"

"I can't believe you would come again, teacher, if we treated you so. I don't think anybody would."

"But perhaps if I came to the front door you would tell me to go to the back door, or to wait awhile, for you had friends with you, and you were ashamed to have them meet me."

"Now, dear teacher, you know we never should be ashamed to have you come to our house. What makes you talk so? You know we all love you."

"Yes, I thought you loved me; but I have found out that you have been impolite and unkind to a very dear friend of mine. He came to your door and knocked, Annie, and you would not let him in. He came to yours, Jane. He came to all your homes."

"When was it? who was it, teacher? You must be mistaken. Perhaps we were not at home."

"Yes, you were at home. Some of you heard him, and told him to wait. One of you tried not

to hear, and began to sing a lively tune. One took up a story book. Another looked out and would have opened the door, I think, if it had been the back door, but she was ashamed to have any one see her let in this friend of mine."

"Who can you mean, teacher? Surely we never acted so to any friend of yours. Who could it be?"

"He is the dearest friend I have. He is yours also; your Saviour and mine. Many and many a time he has come knocking at the door of your heart. You have not tried to hear him; or if he knocked so hard that you could not help hearing, you answered, 'Wait awhile, I cannot open the door now; I have friends who will laugh at me if I have Christ in my heart. I cannot let you in.' Again you have said, 'Wait awhile, for I am too young. I cannot be happy as I now am, if I open the door. I am too young to have the Saviour for my guest. "Go away, and come when I am older.' And so, with one excuse and another, you have all turned the blessed Saviour away many times. You said if you should tell me to go away you thought I would do it. But the Saviour is a better friend than I. He keeps coming."

"O teacher, I never thought of it so. I never knew he wanted to come in so much. How can I get him into my heart?"

"I will give you and all the class one of Christ's precious sayings, and I want you to think of it all the week. Every time you think of it, remember Christ is knocking. These are his beautiful words:—

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'"—(*London*) *Children's Paper.*

NEVER be sorry for any generous thing that you ever did, even if it was betrayed. Never be sorry that you were magnanimous, if the man was mean afterward. Never be sorry that you gave. It was right for you to give, even if you were imposed upon. You cannot afford to keep on the safe side by being mean.

"LITERATURE is the immortality of speech. It embalms for all ages the departed kings of learning, and watches over their repose in the eternal pyramids of Fame."

The Life Book.

"MAMMA, if I were a woman,
If I knew as much as you,
I would write a book," said Lillie,
"And I'd write it good and true.

I would make it just like talking,
As you talked to me last night,
So that every one would read it,
Would love Jesus and do right."

"Every one, my love," said mamma,
"Must at least one book compose;
Each must write his own life-story
From its dawning till its close.

On a new unwritten volume,
Pure and spotless to the sight,
Loving ones confer a title,
Baby hands begin to write;

All through babyhood and childhood,
Youth, mid-life, and trembling age,
Still those hands are writing, writing,
Never lifted from the page.

Every word and every action,
Rude or gentle, wrong or right,
In its ugliness or beauty,
Lives upon those pages white.

Every deed of love and mercy
Shines upon those leaflets fair,
And if one have loved the Saviour,
All his love is written there.

And when death comes, while his kindred,
Weeping, round his couch attend,
Just below the last words written,
Angel hands will trace, 'The End.'

Angel hands will clasp the volume,
And will bear it up to God:
But its teachings will be scattered
O'er the earth, where'er he's trod."

Little Sower.

Voices of Grace.

It is marvellous and beautiful to observe how various are the voices of free grace. "I am thirsty," says one. "Come ye to the waters," she cries.

"I am hungry," says another. "Then eat ye that which is good," she says, "and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

"But I am poor, and have nothing to buy with." "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

"We are weary," sigh the laborers in the sun-beaten fields. "Come unto me," breathes her answer, like a breeze from the waters, "and I will give you rest."

"Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee," she whispers to the pilgrim ready to faint on the highway.

"Behold the fountain!" she cried to the guilty "the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness."

The Little Harper.

THE Christmas bells chimed far and wide;
The Christmas sights were fair to see;
But, with his harp against his heart
The little harper sat apart.
And dreamed of sunny Italy.

"A song!" the merry children cried,
And cast their pennies at his feet;
In answer to the gay command,
He struck the harp with gentle hand,
And sang a Christmas carol sweet,—

The sacred story sung of old,
Of Him who slept on Mary's knee:
And while the soft notes cleft the air,
With upraised eyes he breathed a prayer,—
"O blessed Christ-child, come to me!"

So sad the little harper's song,
The children half forgot their glee;
Yet still he sang the silvery strain,
Repeating oft the sweet refrain,
"O blessed Christ-child, come to me!"

The Christmas sun went down the west;
The light grew dim on spire and dome.
"Good-night, good-night!" the children cried.
With outstretched arms the harper sighed,
"O blessed Christ-child, take me home!"

The Christmas stars were in the sky;
The crowd went by with quicker tread:
The child sat with his hands at rest,
And head bent low upon his breast;
"The little harper sleeps," they said.

But while he slept the stars grew pale,
The mists of earth were backward rolled:
He heard the angel-harper's hymn,
He saw the Christ-child stoop to him,
And waked to hold a harp of gold.

The Sunday School Scholar.

For the Myrtle.

Christmas on the Hill.

THE children of the Hill were in a dilemma. There were two families of them, cousins; and they had been busy for several weeks with great interest and secresy, preparing for the Christmas festival to be held in their church at the village. But two days before Christmas, Nannie, one of the little cousins, fell ill with a very bad throat, which looked and acted as if she were threatened with diptheria; and as the church was three miles away, of course she could not go.

So arose the dilemma. Should all the rest go and leave Nannie at home, and her mamma to take care of her? They thought of the lovely Christmas festival, with the illuminated vestry and the great trees and the beautiful tables and the bright faces of all their friends and it looked *so* charming! How could they give it up? But then there was Nannie with her pale face and her throat wrapped in flannel,—how hard it would be for her to stay at home, and mamma too, and have no Christmas at all. They felt sure Nannie would cry all the evening with disappointment and loneliness. Not that she said a word. She heard them talk about it, and tried to join in cheerfully, but she could not help the wistful look in her eyes, and now and then a sudden dimming with tears.

The struggle was sharp, but short. Scarce a word was said, but her brothers and sisters came to their conclusion first—they would all stay at home with Nannie! They went over and told the other children so, early that morning, and it was agreed among themselves not to say a word about it that day. They would have quiet Christmas games in the evening, such as Nannie could join in, and just quietly hang up their stockings at night, and let "Santa Claus" dispose of what he had to give in that way.

It was strange, to themselves, what a good time they had, all day. If we were thinking only of our own happiness it would pay us to deny ourselves for the sake of the happiness of others, we should feel so happy about it afterwards. As for Nannie they all tried so much to amuse her that she began to think it was not so bad a thing to be sick after all. She did not mean to be selfish, and would have told them all to go; but it made her very happy to have them

with her, after all, for they declared they were much happier than they could be at the church thinking of her left behind.

But a genuine surprise was preparing for them. The other house was very near theirs, and they wanted to wrap Nannie up and have her father take her in so they could see the other children get ready. But their mother said no, they would only hinder them and be in their way. But she ran in and out, and finally staid over there a great part of the afternoon. They thought strange of this, but supposed their mother was helping auntie get them off, and anyway they would hear all about it the next day.

After tea, when they began to talk about popcorn and nuts and Christmas games, their father came in and said their auntie wanted them all to come in a little while, and he had promised to wrap Nannie all up and run across with her in one minute. They thought it queer to go a visiting when their cousins were all gone, but none the less flew and got ready and all ran over with Nannie heading the procession.

Their auntie met them at the door and took the whole flock into her room, and helped them off with their wraps and talked so fast that they had no chance to inquire about the children. They staid in the sitting-room until they were thoroughly warm, wondering meanwhile why the parlor doors were closed, and if they were not going in there, especially as they heard people in there rustling about; but of course they said nothing about it.

Soon the parlor doors slid back and their auntie said, "Come and see what you see!" And what they saw was a beautiful little Christmas tree on the center table, all glittering with lights and presents, and their cousins all around it dancing up and down for joy.

Such a merry Ghristmas eve as that was! They scarcely thought of the festival at the church, any of them. Only one of Nannie's brothers said to the other family, "We didn't suppose *you'd* stay at home too."

"Why not?" said the others. "We shouldn't have any good time if you weren't there. We have the best times all together, wherever it is."

And it seems to us that was the best way in the world to celebrate the Christmas,—the birthday of him who cares for the happiness of all, and in his good plans will never leave one out.

H. A. B.

The Mother's Song.

In a cozy corner,
Safe and snug and warm,
Lies a little birdling,
Sheltered from the storm.

Not a winged creature,
In full plumage shown,
But a tiny spirit
From the Father's Throne.

Little shining forehead,
White, and pure, and fair,
Little wavy tresses,
Of bright silken hair.

Little pearly eyelids,
Shading eyes of blue,
Little smiles and dimples,
Little mouth so true.

Little rosy fingers,
Reaching for the light,
Catching at each shadow
Passing out of sight.

And a mother singing
Soft, and low, and sweet,
Father, keep my darling,
Guide his little feet.

Many steps and weary
In his path may be;
Lead him gently, Father,
To his home and Thee.

In a cozy corner,
Safe, and snug, and warm.
Lies a little birdling,
Sheltered from the storm.

And this cozy corner
Is a mother's heart,
Warm, and pure, and holy,
Of God's love a part.

Trifles.

A gentleman engaged an artist to execute a piece of sculpture for him. Visiting his studio after an absence of several weeks, it seemed to him that the artist had made little progress.

"What have you been doing?" asked the gentleman of the artist.

"Working on this figure."

"But I see nothing done since my last visit."

"Why," answered the artist, "I have brought out this muscle; I have modified this part of the dress; I have slightly changed the expression of the lip."

"But these are trifles," said the gentleman.

"True, sir," replied the artist, "but *perfection is made up of trifles.*"

A FAITHFUL friend is a good defense.

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

—The School Street Sunday School is to have a festival on Christmas eve. What it is to be like is yet a great secret, but we suspect a Christmas tree and various other charming things.

—A little girl of this school, Grace G. Taylor, but nine years old, held a fair at her home, a few days ago, for the benefit of Dr. Ryder's Sunday School, and realized sixty dollars. A charming example for many a favored child to copy.

—The Sunday School Union has just begun a course of lectures on Sunday School topics, one to be given in each of our churches within its limits. The first was given at South Boston, Dec. 10, by Rev. B. F. Bowles of Cambridgeport. The Union also announces a mass meeting at Cambridgeport, which is expected to be very interesting.

MAINE.

—Tke South Auburn School closed for the winter with a grand concert. We are sorry to chronicle the suspension, but glad about the concert. It was a fine affair we learn; prizes distributed to meritorious scholars, and the Superintendent presented with a beautiful gold-headed ebony cane by the school.

—The School at Hermon has also suspended for the winter, closing its exercises with a fine concert.

NEW YORK.

—We noticed last week that the Mission School in New York City was receiving gifts in advance for the holidays. We are pleased to add that its friends gave a dinner, on Thanksgiving Day, to its six hundred little ones, and that the occasion was greatly enjoyed, by those who gave as well as those who partook.

OHIO.

—The Sunday School and congregation at Springfield are to have a Christmas dinner, also a social in the evening. The singing will be given by the school, and other entertaining features will help in what promises to be a happy time.

PENNSYLVANIA.

—The Lombard Street School, at Philadelphia, had a very interesting concert on Nov. 23d, of which a friend writes that everything was admirably done. The programme was something as follows:

"The concert began with a Chorus: "The Prodigal Son." Then followed prayer by Rev. James Shrigley; then another Chorus: "I will seek my Father," and an Address, by Charles H. Russell, Esq., the Superintendent of the School. After the excellent address, the entertainment was made up of fourteen Recitations and Dialogues, and fifteen Solos and Choruses. The music was under the skillful direction of Mr. James G. Alexander. Of course, it was the best ever heard in a Sunday School Concert. The church was filled with interested listeners, and the receipts were large."

VERMONT.

—The Sunday School at Springfield is prospering finely under its superintendent, the pastor's wife. It has just made a donation of library books to one of the needy schools, that at Waterloo, Canada. By the way, we have never heard any but the best accounts of those schools which have lady superintendents. Is it because of superior ingenuity and skill, or of greater zeal and attention? However it is, these good ladies seem to have found the charmed secret of success in a difficult place. Can they not impart it?

WEST VIRGINIA.

—The Sunday School at Wheeling reports to the *Star*, "Our report for the past year is encouraging. Our largest attendance was forty-nine." The School at Fork Ridge suspends until Spring; we hope then to revive with new life. Prospects are good for a school at Moundsville, and efforts are being made to build a church there.

Appetite Early Created.

A very distinguished scholar of our nation said to a temperance lecturer, after he had heard him speak, one evening: "There is one thing which, as you visit different places, I wish you to do everywhere; that is, to entreat every mother never to give a drop of strong drink to a child. I have had to fight as for my life all my days to keep from dying a drunkard, because I was fed with spirit when a child. I acquired a taste for it. My brother, poor fellow! died a drunkard. I would not have a child of mine take a drop of it for anything. Warn every mother wherever you go, never to give a drop of it to a child."

Prophecies About the Jews.

The prophecies about the Jews in the Bible are very remarkable, and afford a wonderful proof of the truth of this Book of books. It was said that "they should be plucked from off their own land, and removed into all the kingdoms of the earth," and behold it is done. It was said that they should "be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem be trodden down of the Gentiles;" and this is literally accomplished. There are other passages which speak of their final blessing with the fulness of the Gentiles, when all shall enjoy together the true worship and service of the one God and Father of all. Whenever we think of the Jews, then, let us think of this great promise of God respecting them; and let us be thankful that the promise will be fulfilled, just as surely as these old prophecies in reference to God's ancient chosen people have come to pass.

Bad Library Books.

The *Churchman*, an Episcopal paper, deplores a prevalent evil which it calls "a deadly mental dyspepsia that has had its foundations laid in many of of our American girls, between the ages of seven and fourteen, by the gorging of washy Sunday School books." There is, we have no doubt, too much truth in this statement. What can be done to lessen the evil? There should be greater care on the part of our publishers as to what they recommend for Sabbath School libraries; and this is not all; our parish and Sabbath School committees on books ought oftener to know what they are doing when they order books for their libraries. We have been astonished as well as grieved when we have been told by some publishers what strange books were ordered by committees on Sabbath School libraries for reading to be given to our young folks. This "deadly mental dyspepsia" will be worse before it is better, unless there is a great change in the matter of selecting books for our Sabbath School libraries.

—— A new "Children's Catechism" has just been published at Central Falls, R. I. It is by Mrs. A. S. Arnold, the author of "Uncle Timothy Tabor," and other good Sabbath School Library books with which many of our readers are acquainted. The lessons in the Catechism are for the smaller classes, and are to be recited in concert.

Life of the Saviour.

LESSON LXVI.

CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.—PART II.

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

SCRIPTURE, — John viii. 31–59.

Question. — How could those who believed on Jesus as the Messiah, be his disciples?

Answer. — John viii. 31.

Q. — What would be their condition when they should know the truth?

A. — John viii. 32.

Q. — What did the Jews reply to him regarding their freedom?

A. — John viii. 33.

NOTE. The Jews supposed political freedom was meant. They were still blind to the truth that Jesus had come to make them spiritually free.

Q. — What did Jesus tell them is the condition of those who commit sin?

A. — John viii. 34.

NOTE. Bondman or slave of sin would be a better translation than servant of sin.

Q. — Does the bondman or slave always remain connected with the family?

A. — John viii. 35.

Q. — Would the freedom which the son could give be a perfect freedom?

A. — John viii. 36.

NOTE. Jesus may have referred to the two sons of Abraham, one of which was sent away; for the Jews had claimed that they were children of Abraham, and Jesus was showing them that there may be two kinds among the children.

Q. — Why did they seek to kill Jesus?

A. — John viii. 37.

Q. — What words did Jesus speak?

A. — John viii. 38.

Q. — What words did the Jews speak?

A. — John viii. 38.

Q. — Who was their father?

A. — John viii. 44.

Q. — Whom did the Jews claim as their father?

A. — John viii. 39.

Q. — What did Jesus assure them they would be if they were truly Abraham's children?

A. — John viii. 30.

Q. — What did Abraham not do?

A. — John viii. 40.

Q. — What would they do if God were their father?

A. — John viii. 42.

Q. — Were they able in their wicked state, to understand the words of Jesus?

A. — John viii. 43.

Q. — Of whom were these Jews and what lusts would they indulge?

A. — John viii. 44.

Q. — What does Christ say of the devil?

A. — John viii. 44.

NOTE. Jesus here refers to the spirit of hatred and falsehood. The best comment upon what constitutes a murder will be found in St. Johns 1st epistle, iii. 12–15. The Jews would not receive the truth of Jesus. They resisted it and adhered to what was false, their hatred and murderous spirit grew out of the falsehood to which they clung. Respecting the devil, Jesus talks to the Jews upon their ground. For other uses of the word which will illustrate its meaning here, see Matt. xvi. 23; John vi. 70; 1 Tim. iii. 14; Tit. ii. 3.

Q. — Determined to contend with Jesus and insult him, what did they reply to his assertion that whosoever believed on him should not see death?

A. — John viii. 52, 53.

Q. — Did they know the God in whom they pretended to believe?

A. — John viii. 54, 55.

Q. — If Jesus had said that he did not know him, what would he be?

A. — John viii. 55.

Q. — Did Abraham look forward to the day of Christ with gladness?

A. — John viii. 56.

Q. — What did the Jews do upon this?

A. — John viii. 59.

Answers.

DEC. 16. Bible Dictionary and Concordance.

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